



# Shoreline

Vol. 15, Issue 9, September 2008

## Remembering the One-Room Schoolhouse

Cherry Hill



As September rolls around, many of us are reminded that summer is nearly over and it is about that time of year when schools return to session. The schools of today are much different from those of by-gone eras. Electronic Smart Boards replace chalk, computers replace notebooks, and slide rules have gone the way of the dinosaur. While most tout these as advancements, a certain nostalgia for school days of old still remains close to our hearts and no era of education represents that nostalgia better than that of the oneroom schoolhouse.

The history of one-room schoolhouses in one Delmarvan County is recalled in the Wicomico County Retired Teachers Association's book, *Recollections: Wicomico's One Room Schools*, published in 1970. The work was compiled by a committee consisting of Emily C. Morris, Hazel J. Hearne, Stella H. Brittingham, Marie A. Dashiell, Mary T. Jones, Joanna A. Lankford and Mabel R. Wimbrow. The group worked together to preserve the history of Wicomico's one-room schoolhouses before it was lost, or "merely written in the wind" as they state.

Their research uncovered as many as 83 one-room schools operating in

Wicomico County between 1867 and 1948. Their history begins with the creation of Wicomico County in 1867 out of portions of Somerset and Worcester counties. It was not long after Wicomico County's inception that a school board was founded under L. P. Humphreys. Humphreys organized the construction of 24 schools at the cost of \$325 each.

Teachers for these schools were trained in several different ways. Some attended institutes held yearly by the state of Maryland in Ocean City. Others left after ninth grade to attend teacher colleges in Towson and Bowie. Some, with less formal education, chose to take state examinations which would qualify them to teach.

School terms often varied in length during the one-room era. The average term for white students was from early September through the end of May. African-American schools, on the other hand, operated only through March or April as the county refused to pay for the extra months. Black communities were forced to fund their own schools if they wanted them to remain open through May. This led school in May to be known as "Pay School" in most African-American communities. School terms were also interrupted by agricultural seasons. Schools in Wicomico County often operated on half-day schedules during strawberry season to allow students to help on the farm.

As the committee wrote:

"Conditions were primitive, supplies meager, transportation poor, but the most was made of every hour spent in one room schools. During the 7 and sometimes 8 or 9 years spent there, many citizens learned the basics that would help them in building better tomorrows for their communities"

Glass Hill



As we prepare to send the next generation of citizens to school, it is nice to visit our educational past.

- **Cherry Walk School** was about 10 miles west of Salisbury. It boasted two outside toilets and an outdoor water pump. A large wood stove capable of burning 3-foot logs was used to heat the building.
- **Friendship School** was located on the Pittsville-Powellville Road and is probably most famous for one of its pupils, a certain Arthur W. Perdue, founder of Perdue Farms Inc.
- **Glass Hill School**, located 10 miles east of Salisbury on Old Ocean City Road, was a negro school which boasted one of the first male teachers in Wicomico County: Mr. Emerson C. Holloway of Delmar.
- **Rockawalkin School** was, built in 1872, now standing on the property of Pemberton Elementary on Pemberton Drive. The school was originally located on MD 349 but was moved to its new location and restored in 1973. The restored school is owned and operated by the Wicomico County Historical Society which uses it for educational programs. ☺



Friendship



Rockawalkin

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## *"We're History... Without You"*

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### **Tastes of Spain**

An evening featuring the 'Tastes of Spain' will be held to benefit the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at the Salisbury home of L. Paul Morris, Jr., on Saturday, October 11, from, 3:30-8:30 p.m. Tickets for this evening of traditional Spanish cuisine, featuring 12 or more regional Spanish tapas, paellas, zarzuela, postres, six regional Spanish wines, classical Spanish guitar music and good company are \$50 per person and can be reserved by calling the Nabb Research Center at 410-543-6312. Seats are limited to 75 people. ☺



### **Upcoming Events Around the Shore:**

#### ***Through October 2008***

##### ***Julia A. Purnell Museum Exhibit***

Snow Hill, MD

Exhibits depicting religious life on the Eastern Shore.

Information: 410-632-0515

or [www.purnellmuseum.com](http://www.purnellmuseum.com)

#### ***Saturday, September 27***

##### ***Allen Historical Society Dinner and Cemetery Walk***

Allen Historical Society host a dinner at 5 p.m. at Allen Community Hall on Collins Wharf Road. Dinner is followed by a cemetery walk of Asbury and Friendship United Methodist Church cemeteries. Tickets are available at \$15 each.

Information: Melissa Bright: 410-742-4085 or

George Shivers: 410-749-9064

#### ***October 18-19, 2008***

##### ***Pemberton Wine Festival***

Pemberton Historical Park

Arts, crafts, food, live music and fine wine.

Salisbury, MD

Information: 410-548-4914 or

[www.autumnwinefestival.org](http://www.autumnwinefestival.org)